

further limits funds available for medical care, remains virtually unknown to enrollees.

Federal officials, eager to keep HMOs in business, have even been willing to violate federal law. In August 1998, a federal court chided the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for renewing HMO contracts that violate their own Medicare regulations.

#### THE RUSE OF PATIENT PROTECTION

Truth be told, HMOs allowed politicians to promise access to comprehensive health-care services without actually delivering them. Because treatment decisions could not be linked directly to Congress, HMOs provided the perfect cover for its plans to contain costs nationwide through health-care rationing. Now that citizens are angry with managed (rationed) care, the responsible parties in Congress, Senator Kennedy in particular, return with legislation ostensibly to protect patients from the HMOs they instituted.

At worst, such offers are an obfuscation designed to entrench federal control over health care through the HMOs. At best they are deceptive placation. Congress has no desire to eliminate managed care, and federal regulation of HMOs and other managed-care corporations will not protect patients from rationing. Even the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged in its June 12, 2000, *Pegram v. Herdrich* decision that to survive financially as Congress intended, HMOs must give physicians incentives to ration treatment.

Real patient protection flows from patient control. Only when patients hold health-care

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

dollars in their own hands will they experience the protection and power inherent in purchasing their own insurance policies, making cost-conscious health-care decisions, and inciting cost-reducing competition for the cash.

What could be so bad about that? A lot, it seems. Public officials worry privately that patients with power may not choose managed-care plans, eventually destabilizing the HMOs Congress is so dependent on for cost containment and national health-care initiatives. Witness congressional constraints on individually owned, tax-free medical savings accounts and the reluctance to break up employer-sponsored coverage by providing federal tax breaks to individuals. Unless citizens wise up to Congress's unabashed but unadvertised support for managed care, it appears unlikely that real patient power will rise readily to the top of its agenda.

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### RECOGNIZING MAULDIN-DORFMEIER CONSTRUCTION

#### HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 27, 2001*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mauldin-Dorfmeier Construction for receiving the prestigious Excel-

lence in Construction Eagle Award. Mauldin-Dorfmeier is receiving the "Best of the Best" Award from the Golden Gate Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors.

Mauldin-Dorfmeier Construction, Inc. (MDC) was established in 1983 by Patrick Mauldin and Alan Dorfmeier. Their general contractors activities are focused in central and northern California. MDC has its administrative offices and construction yard based in Fresno.

MDC has a staff of over 55 professionals, including experienced project managers, engineers, and over 150 skilled craftsmen ready to take on any construction task. Their current bonding capability is in excess of \$100 million, with the ability to bond individual projects in excess of \$50 million.

Mauldin-Dorfmeier has received many industry awards, including the coveted "Constructor Award for Excellence in Client Service," awarded by the Associated General Contractors of California for the Bulldog Stadium Expansion.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mauldin-Dorfmeier Construction, Inc. for receiving the Excellence in Construction Eagle Award. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Mauldin-Dorfmeier many more years of continued success.